

CONDUCTED BY THE  
**INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION**  
1313 East 60 Street, Chicago 37, Illinois

Report No. 183

April, 1959

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## THE ROLE OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT IN URBAN RENEWAL

*How is the need for urban renewal determined? How can the city government help in selling urban renewal to the general public? What are the long-term implications of urban renewal for the city government?*

The Housing Act of 1949 was the first national recognition, in law, of the problem of development and redevelopment of urban areas. The 1949 Act authorized the Housing and Home Finance administrator to carry out a program of slum clearance and urban redevelopment through loans and grants to local government agencies. The concept was broadened considerably through the Housing Act of 1954 by the addition of rehabilitation and conservation and by coining a new term, "urban renewal." The 1954 Act provides for federal grants to cover generally up to two-thirds of the net cost to the city government or other local agency for planning, administration, land assembly, demolition, and preparation for resale.

Municipal action which began slowly is now accelerating rapidly to meet the problems of deterioration, especially in central business districts, which affect almost all cities. The scope of urban renewal is indicated in a report from the Urban Renewal Administration which shows, as of June 30, 1958, that 554 projects were in some stage of development in 331 communities. Of interest to officials in smaller cities is the fact that about 200 of these projects are in cities of less than 25,000 population.

Later information from the Urban Renewal Administration, as of January 31, 1959, shows 647 projects in 388 communities. These projects, only 10 of which have been completed, involve federal capital-grant reservations totaling \$1.3 billion.

The purpose of this report is to provide guidelines for city officials in determining the need for urban renewal, delineating urban renewal areas, selling the program to interest groups and the general public, and providing the basis for long-term community development. Within this context it is concerned with the formulation and execution of municipal policy as a long-term program rather than immediate, short-term projects.

This report is based on "case histories" submitted by city managers and other officials in seven council-manager cities: Hartford, Connecticut (177,397); Columbia, Missouri (31,974); Tacoma, Washington (143,673); Phoenix, Arizona (244,599); Norfolk, Virginia (213,513); Berkeley, California (113,805); and Pontiac, Michigan (73,681).

Before taking up specific sections of this report, four definitions are needed to provide clarity in subsequent discussion:

Urban renewal is a broad, over-all term for coordinated public and private efforts to prevent and remove blighting influences. It includes conservation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment.

Conservation is the most limited type of program involving relatively minor improvements to public and private property. It is concerned with maintenance and improvement of existing buildings.

Rehabilitation means restoration of areas where blight has become fairly widespread and therefore requires more public and private effort and a considerably larger financial investment. It may include demolition of substandard individual properties and some new construction.



Redevelopment is the most comprehensive type of program and involves planning, land assembly, clearing and demolition, resale, and rebuilding. Redevelopment is the phase of urban renewal most familiar to the general public, especially in larger cities.

### Advantages of Urban Renewal

In a nation that is becoming increasingly urbanized the advantages of urban renewal should be obvious. Cities today, as places to live and work, have serious shortcomings — congestion, poor housing, heavy traffic, air pollution, and so on — which only urban renewal can overcome. While urban renewal is tremendously expensive, it is both a short and long-term investment in better living for a substantial portion of the nation's population.

The advantages of urban renewal are set forth very well in the Urban Land Institute's *The Challenge of Urban Renewal*, and only brief highlights will be shown here.

1. Urban renewal contributes to economic growth through investment in public improvements and provision of a more efficient economic base.
2. Urban renewal holds great promise for better allocation of national resources through provision of urban amenities — better schools and better housing versus bigger automobiles and television sets.
3. Urban renewal contributes to better housing for low and middle-income groups.
4. Urban renewal provides a better tax base thus helping to stabilize municipal revenues.
5. Urban renewal provides opportunity for private investment in residential development.
6. Urban renewal through conservation and rehabilitation provides a better neighborhood environment for existing properties.
7. Urban renewal helps stabilize the central business district which in most cities is the largest source of tax revenue.
8. Urban renewal can provide a more livable environment for everyone through schools, parks, playgrounds, and similar developments.
9. Especially for larger cities, urban renewal, expensive as it is, offers the only hope against rapid deterioration of residential areas, decline in business, and a creeping blight that always seems to spread rather than contract.
10. While problems of blight and deterioration are more intense in size and degree in larger cities, they are a potential threat to any city. Although comprehensive urban renewal is not necessary in all cities, it will be the rare city that does not need at the very least a program of housing conservation together with housing code enforcement.

### Determination of Need

The determination of need for urban renewal — when and where — is not as simple as might at first seem apparent. Most cities have areas, neighborhoods, or districts that they are not proud of, but it is a different matter to define such areas with the precision of a land survey to determine what can be salvaged and to meet requirements for federal financial assistance.

A start must be made in generalized terms and then refined in greater and greater detail. Hartford, for example, gave top priority to a generalized area on the east side for three main reasons:

"The city urgently needed to get rid of bad housing in an area which was no longer the right place for people to live because it was surrounded by heavy traffic, lacked neighborhood facilities, and was being increasingly invaded by commerce and industry.

"The city's central shopping district just as urgently needed cleared land as a site for construction of modern store buildings with plenty of off-street parking, close to main highways, to



meet the growing competition offered by the more efficiently designed and better equipped shopping centers then springing up in the suburbs.

"Forthcoming express highway facilities . . . dictated the need for major street improvements. . . ."

This priority was indicated by the city's need to preserve the competitive position of the central business district. Second priority was given to two other areas on the basis of opportunity for private investment in middle-income housing and to alleviate the worst conditions of deterioration and slums by redevelopment with public housing for low-income families.

Several other cities stressed the importance of preserving the central business district. The movement for urban renewal in Pontiac, Michigan, was supported in its early stages by key businessmen who were concerned about the decline of the central business district. They hoped that revitalization would provide better competition against outlying shopping centers.

Objective Criteria. In delineating areas for urban renewal, objective criteria are needed to locate the areas with some precision and to establish priorities. Depending on the complexity of the problem, this can range from simple compilation of municipal government statistics on police calls, fire calls, and the like to rather detailed socio-economic surveys.

Berkeley, California, in a report *The Problem of Blight in Berkeley* (dated January 15, 1958), identified its blighted areas and measured the relative intensity of blight in these areas. This was done through three kinds of surveys: (1) evaluation of census tracts on a point schedule for building and site, neighborhood, and occupancy characteristics; (2) block-by-block analysis of the entire city with penalty scores assigned on the basis of the condition of dwelling units, population density in dwelling units, and visual evaluation of housing and neighborhood quality; and (3) use of data published in 1954 by the Berkeley Council of Social Welfare and the School of Social Welfare at the University of California in a report entitled *Welfare Problems and Services in Berkeley, California*. This survey ranked census tracts on an evaluation schedule by the use of such factors as incidence of tuberculosis, venereal disease, and other public health problems; boys and girls on probation; frequency of public welfare cases; and condition of dwelling units. Data from the three surveys were tabulated and mapped, and all three surveys pointed to the same general areas as the most blighted.

In Columbia, Missouri, need was determined on the basis of number of fires, number of crimes, and a comparison of the cost of supplying municipal services with income derived from the area. Consideration also was given to the poor appearance of the area, potential public health problems, undesirable proximity to the central business district, and poor living conditions which people had to accept who lived in the renewal area.

The city manager of Tacoma stated that "The spread of blight in Tacoma was obvious. The extent of need was measured, in 1954, by use of census data and delineation of areas lacking basic community facilities." The manager pointed out that a preliminary survey, issued in 1954 by the city planning department, did not show the exact boundaries of potential renewal areas but did indicate the magnitude of the problem and the need for city government action. In Pontiac the impetus for urban renewal came in early 1956 from the mayor, city manager, and several other top city officials and business leaders who were concerned with the condition of part of the central business district. In ascertaining urban renewal areas, use was made of the 1950 Census of Housing, aerial photographs, the Sanborn Atlas, and assessed valuation and property tax data.

Statistics developed in Norfolk for 20 years for low-cost public housing provided the principal basis for evaluation of urban renewal areas. Consideration also was given to planning department data developed for the central business district and contiguous areas, the major highway system, incidence of police and fire calls, and other extensive administrative statistics.

Phoenix relied on a housing survey made in 1953 by the city health department. The survey, based on methods recommended by the American Public Health Association, was applied to a 163-block area that the 1950 census indicated to be largely substandard.

Hartford's criteria for urban renewal were developed from four major sources of information:



(1) analysis of census data for condition of housing; (2) field inspections in selected areas by the city health department supplemented by later spot checks to up-date the information; (3) general development of a renewal program for the entire city based on field surveys by personnel with the city planning commission and the city redevelopment agency, and engineering department records on inadequacies of public facilities; and (4) special studies by outside consultants on redevelopment of the downtown district.

Available Statistics. For this report city officials were asked to indicate what kinds of statistics *that are readily available* are the most useful in determining need. Block statistics on the condition of housing from the 1950 Census of Housing were mentioned most frequently by these cities. Unfortunately these data are available only for cities with a 1950 population of 50,000 or more.

The only other statistics that are "readily available" are those that the city government has developed for administrative purposes. These include a wide range of information such as specific costs of various kinds of municipal services in specific areas, land-use data for city planning, information on the condition of housing developed for enforcement of a housing code, case-load statistics for a social welfare agency, and property tax data. The extent to which this information was available varied widely among the seven cities.

Sometimes a city may be fortunate enough to have useful information compiled by an outside agency. This was true in Berkeley where the report, *Welfare Problems and Services in Berkeley, California*, provided data by census tracts on health and welfare problems.

### Selling Urban Renewal

Once the need for urban renewal has been determined and measured, a selling job must be undertaken—sometimes to the city council, more often to the general public and to interest groups directly concerned. It is a difficult job when conceived as urban renewal rather than downtown renewal. The city manager of Hartford pointed out: "There was very little public interest in support of urban renewal in Hartford prior to 1956. With the appointment of the redevelopment agency in April, 1950, support for urban renewal came primarily from agency members and staff, the city administration, and the local newspapers. Public concern for renewal was not awakened until interest and activity in redevelopment caught fire nationally."

The city manager went on to say that "the city council . . . began to take a more active interest in a renewal program for Hartford. Members of the common council were active in promoting renewal after they realized it was proving feasible elsewhere and that it could be economically, socially, and politically beneficial to espouse such a program."

At one extreme the mayor and city council in Columbia were officially "not in opposition," but unofficially two of the five city councilmen were openly and publicly opposed. In Tacoma, on the other hand, "members of the city council and the mayor were instrumental in selling urban renewal to the public." The city of Tacoma also played a leading part in the development of urban renewal enabling legislation for municipalities in Washington. Such legislation was adopted in 1957.

Organized Local Support. The importance of organized local support in promoting urban renewal was recognized in all cities.

More important, however, was the fact that organized groups were promoting urban renewal before it was officially recognized by the city government. In Tacoma organized support was needed in promoting state enabling legislation. During this time a Citizens Committee for Tacoma's Future Development was organized to help plan and support a capital improvement program involving substantial bond issues. Many of the improvements have a bearing on urban renewal.

In Norfolk, "The need for urban redevelopment was so apparent that virtually no selling job was necessary." This, however, understates the factors of support and opposition considerably. A brief review of urban renewal in Norfolk is necessary to put the quoted statement in context.

In 1935 the city manager appointed a slum clearance commission to compile data on slum areas in Norfolk. This provided the basis for a report made by the city manager in 1937 which set off public reaction and led to the establishment of the Norfolk Housing Authority in 1940. During



that three-year period the city council twice voted down the establishment of a housing authority before public pressure finally changed the position of the city. At that time controversy involved the question of public housing. The support for public housing in the late 1930's came from the YWCA, the business and professional women's club, the family welfare association, the county medical society, the ministerial association, the central labor council, the local newspapers, and several other groups. The only organized opposition was from the local real estate board.

During the 1930's the housing authority in Norfolk concentrated on low-cost housing and in 1948 began the first studies for broader housing and urban redevelopment. The first redevelopment project was approved in September, 1951, and two projects have been added since. With the lapse of 20 years, the position of the city council has completely changed, and the council in recent years has provided aggressive public leadership for urban renewal.

Existing civic and other organized groups have always provided support for urban renewal in Hartford. In addition, groups were organized at different times for specific promotional tasks. The first was the Citizens Committee on Redevelopment which was appointed by the mayor in 1956 to campaign for a redevelopment bond issue. This committee was largely represented by major business interests together with some representation from education, religion, and organized labor. The committee worked for the successful adoption of the bond issue and later helped promote a city charter amendment to allow establishment of a city department of housing. The committee ceased to function in the spring of 1958 with its leadership being taken over by the Committee for Hartford (discussed below.)

The Chamber of Commerce provided the second major source of organized local support. Although the chamber had expressed interest in urban renewal, active support was not provided until 1956 following a reorganization of the chamber. The chamber participated in many ways in creating support by testifying at public hearings, financing an initial economic analysis of the central business district, and preparing a film for public showing. One of the most important contributions of the chamber was creation of the Urban Development Team with representatives from the city council, the city planning commission, the redevelopment agency, the city administration, the Hartford Development Commission, the Hartford Citizens Committee for Redevelopment, and the Chamber of Commerce. The team was largely concerned with an urban development project for the central business district and (1) provided advice for government officials and agencies, (2) worked with private enterprise to see that it met its financial responsibilities, and (3) encouraged citizen support and understanding of redevelopment. The team became inactive in late 1957 when the economic analysis of the downtown area was substantially complete.

Major local support now is provided by the Committee for Hartford which was organized in 1958 with a membership of 48 representing major political parties, business interests, lawyers, and religious leaders. The committee's range of interest is considerably broader than downtown development. It has standing subcommittees on general and special renewal projects, planning and community development, transportation, and other areas.

Berkeley reported that broad community support has not been developed. A start has been made, however, with the recent formation of a committee called the Citizens Committee for a Better Berkeley. This committee is working on several urban renewal projects, especially the development of an effective citizen organization.

Initial citizen support for urban renewal in Pontiac came from downtown businessmen as represented in the Chamber of Commerce. Active individual support also was provided by certain key persons such as the president of one of the banks, the manager of a large department store, and the publisher of the local newspaper. These individuals and groups worked closely with the city government to support the project in every way possible. They recognized the need for the city government to work as the primary agency in securing federal assistance, but they were interested in helping in any other way on special projects. Therefore the Downtown Merchants' Association, an affiliate of the Chamber of Commerce, raised \$17,000 for a special traffic and transportation study to be integrated with redevelopment planning.

Citizen support was evident in Pontiac before formal urban renewal was undertaken. The urban renewal coordinator commented: "We have had no difficulty up to the present in obtaining



citizen support. In our workable program we are outlining steps to organize citizen groups in the residential section of the urban renewal project to complement business groups. Pontiac is a city of essentially homeowners (almost 80 per cent of homes are owned by their occupants), and many property owners have a substantial independence and pride in the appearance of their properties."

In Phoenix, where urban renewal is in the early stages, considerable citizen support has already been obtained through organized groups. The local real estate board has provided active support (except for public housing) for some time. The Phoenix Progress Committee worked on the improvement of the downtown area, but has since become inactive. A special citizens' committee formulated and presented a housing code which was adopted by the city in 1956. A second housing code committee has presented a stronger housing code which is now pending in the city council. An urban renewal committee is now being formed to stimulate citizen interest in all phases of the program.

In Columbia, as contrasted with Phoenix and Norfolk, the city government has taken no part in organizing support groups. Principal support has been provided by the Chamber of Commerce, civic groups, and the two daily newspapers. The groups campaigned for about five years and lost one election before they were successful in obtaining a favorable vote of the people in May, 1956, for city participation in urban renewal.

Role of the City Government. It is difficult to generalize on the role of the city government in promoting urban renewal on the basis of the practices of these seven cities. Certainly the city council has to approve of the concept of urban renewal and get a workable program developed before any federal aid is available. Beyond that city government leadership ranges from an openly aggressive stand on urban renewal to working largely through citizen groups.

In Tacoma the city council established a citizens' committee on capital improvements to promote a general obligation bond issue which was adopted in the fall of 1958. The council continues to work closely with the citizens' committee which has since reorganized with a permanent subcommittee on urban renewal.

In Pontiac the mayor, city council, and city manager worked with business leaders right from the start in the development of urban renewal. In Phoenix the city council has appointed several citizen committees to help on promoting different phases of urban renewal, such as the housing code.

In Hartford the city government has worked through the Committee for Hartford and predecessor agencies. Several members of the city council are officially represented on the Committee for Hartford.

The Norfolk city council has taken no part in forming citizen groups to support urban renewal. However, the city government and many citizen organizations have been active in urban renewal and predecessor programs in public housing and redevelopment for many years. Urban renewal is well accepted and well understood, and there no longer is any need for the city council to promote organization of citizen groups. In Columbia the city has taken no part in organizing citizen support groups.

Outside Aid. Cities have not used outside agencies for the promotion of urban renewal either among interest groups or with the public at large. Three cities, however, mentioned that ACTION (American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods) was useful in providing statistical data and explanatory brochures on all aspects of urban renewal. In addition, most of the cities indicated that the federal agencies (Housing and Home Finance Agency and Urban Renewal Administration), were extremely helpful on technical aspects of planning and procedures for securing federal aid. In some instances field representatives of HHFA and URA visited the cities to provide first-hand advice on specific problems.

Organized Local Opposition. It is noteworthy that in these seven cities urban renewal, as of today, is not controversial. This is an oversimplification, however, because of three factors: (1) The controversial phases, as for public housing in Norfolk, were threshed out years ago. (2) Powerful business interests favor urban renewal as a means of salvaging the central business district. (3) It is likely that the full implications of urban renewal are not well understood by business interests and especially by the general public.



Perhaps the strongest opposition has been encountered in Hartford where urban renewal is still in the early stages. The city manager reports:

"There has been no widespread organized opposition to redevelopment in Hartford. Such opposition as has arisen occurred over two issues. The first was a proposal to revise the city's housing code to make its provisions more stringent. This move was vociferously opposed by the Property Owners' Association, representing principally property owners of small rental units. . . .

"The second source of opposition has been of a less organized nature. It has come from businessmen located in the Front-Market redevelopment area who have resented being displaced from this area. These businessmen wanted to be given priority in being redevelopers in the areas from which they were being displaced. They were able to voice their objections in such a manner that the common council withheld approval of the redevelopment plan for the Front-Market project until the Redevelopment Agency gave assurance that such businesses would be allowed to so relocate if that were feasible. Similar council support was given to the opposition of a national church to its initial inclusion in the redevelopment plan. This opposition was instrumental in holding up the Front-Market project for about two years."

In Columbia, "the opposition to urban renewal came from a citizens committee and the two councilmen as individuals outside of their official positions."

In Norfolk the opposition came largely during the late 1930's on the controversial aspects of the low-cost public housing. Although the local real estate board still opposes the public housing aspect of slum clearance, no other opposition has been encountered in recent years. On the contrary, support for urban renewal has been expressed vigorously by the city council, the city administration, interest groups, and the general public.

Phoenix reports no "vigorous organized opposition," but the local real estate board is opposed to public housing. Berkeley, Pontiac, and Tacoma all report that there has been no organized opposition.

#### Financing Urban Renewal

City officials were asked to comment on this question: "How far is your city prepared to go in financing urban renewal beyond federal, state, and city funds now committed?" This ties in closely with the city's concept of urban renewal as a permanent function of the city government and long-term financial planning.

No generalization is possible. In three cities urban renewal is clearly recognized as a long-term, perhaps permanent, program of the city government. Pontiac reports that it could justify total expenditures of \$25 million over a long period of time and that the capital improvement program of the city recognizes the need for reserving funds for urban renewal. The present project for the central business district has been endorsed by the city commission and will be carried out over a period of three to five years. The city commission also has indicated its interest in a continuing program to meet deterioration and blight in several other sections of the city.

Tacoma reports that urban renewal is considered a permanent financial obligation of the city government. Norfolk also reports that urban renewal is a permanent financial obligation, at least until present projects are completed which will take about 10 years.

It is not as clear-cut in other cities. Phoenix is now studying the problems of financing urban renewal, and in Berkeley no specific financial commitments have been made. The response from Columbia poses something of a paradox: "The council has of necessity adopted a pay-as-go plan for financing due to the defeat of a recent bond proposal and has indicated that they are only thinking in terms of the present project rather than any permanent urban renewal program. On the other hand our 'workable program of urban renewal' does commit the city to long-range plans and those plans do require financial planning. The elements of the 'workable program' express the intent of the city to make an effort to prevent blight and thus the obligation seems to be a permanent one."

Hartford reports no definite plans for financing beyond present projects, which involve a considerable expenditure.



Long-term Planning. Over the years urban renewal will involve considerable planning not only for redevelopment projects but also for sewer and water lines, streets, and related public improvements serving renewal areas. For the community seeking to develop urban renewal, the comprehensive or master plan is an absolute necessity. This provides the basic framework for designating and scheduling projects and subprojects in the long-term capital improvement program and the six-year capital budget. Planning of this kind is not yet under way in Berkeley, Columbia, and Phoenix. In Tacoma it is just starting and is tied in with the work of the citizens' committee studying capital improvements. The long-term plan in Pontiac includes three specific projects currently in the planning and development stages as well as several additional projects. In Norfolk urban renewal projects are definitely an integral part of long-range planning.

Hartford occupies an in-between position and reports: "The city has not worked out a comprehensive renewal program as such. . . . The city's approach in the past has been on an individual project basis." On the other hand their long-term financial planning, by the standards of the great majority of cities, would be considered very good. The capital budget, working within a general debt limitation of 5 per cent of assessed valuation, can provide about \$2 million per year, with voter approval, for redevelopment purposes. This would be the local contribution beyond the amounts committed for four redevelopment projects now under way.

The long-range financial plan in Hartford is flexible and allows an annual commitment of the average amount of \$2 million with capital improvements scheduled so as to maximize their eligibility as local contributions towards federally and state assisted redevelopment projects. The 1959-1960 budget provides for additional funds for the redevelopment agency, and the city expects to work out further long-range plans during the fiscal year. In that way additional funds for the redevelopment projects can be definitely planned, financed, and scheduled.

#### Administrative Organization

Most mayors, city councilmen, and city managers would agree emphatically with the statement made by John M. Urie in the May, 1957, issue of *Public Management*: "After considerable study of a variety of urban renewal agencies I have come to the conclusion that urban renewal can best be administered within the regular municipal framework. There is very little to support the establishment of independent urban renewal commissions or authorities except the pressure of local special interest groups. . . . Actually the urban renewal program can be administered very successfully by the city's regular organization."

In practice, however, state laws, local customs, and other factors hinder the placement of urban renewal within the regular family of city departments. The Norfolk Housing Authority was created in 1940 and became the Housing and Redevelopment Authority in 1948 when the first appropriation was made for studies leading to housing and urban redevelopment. In Columbia urban renewal is carried out by two separate agencies: the Columbia Housing Authority and the Columbia Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority. Both are appointed by the city council, and they have in turn jointly appointed an executive director.

The Hartford Redevelopment Agency was created in April, 1950, and is run by five commissioners appointed by the city manager. The city council retains substantial control over the agency including approval of applications for state or federal financial assistance, approval of all project redevelopment plans, approval of city appropriations for net projects costs, and approval of all contracts with private developers.

Other city agencies in Hartford have responsibility for certain phases of urban renewal. The city plan commission certifies areas as meeting state requirements for renewal, develops the city-wide renewal program, suggests priority for projects, checks conformity of projects with the general plan, and works closely with the planning staff of the redevelopment agency. The city department of housing administers the program for section 221 housing for persons displaced by renewal or other government projects. Housing code enforcement is carried out jointly by inspectors from the health, fire, and licenses and inspections departments.

The Hartford Redevelopment Agency serves as the local authority for state and federal



renewal contacts; develops redevelopment plans for specific projects; provides assistance on relocation for families, individuals, and businesses displaced by governmental action; and issues bonds, subject to voter approval, for financing projects.

Enforcement of the housing code to control existing housing is almost always separated from other urban renewal activities. Only in Phoenix does the urban renewal department include housing code responsibilities. In Tacoma the minimum housing code has not yet been adopted by the city council. In the other five cities housing code enforcement is vested in such departments as health, buildings, fire, and public works.

Separate Departmental Status. Only one city, Phoenix, has a department of urban renewal as such. In three cities — Berkeley, Pontiac, and Tacoma — urban renewal is assigned to staff in the office of the city manager. Tacoma expects to give urban renewal full departmental status when projects enter the execution stage. Berkeley will continue to rely on an urban renewal coordinator in the office of the city manager with considerable work being done by certain city departments. Pontiac expects, as work progresses, to strengthen the city planning department by adding a principal planner for urban renewal while retaining coordination and control in the office of the city manager. Thus these four cities have and will have central management control of urban renewal.

The report from Columbia, where the city has two separate authorities, states that "I definitely feel that urban renewal should have separate department status and be headed by a person with experience in the job." The report from Norfolk states "The separate governmental authority as established here in Norfolk fits our needs very well."

In the absence of state enabling legislation, Hartford has found it advantageous to work through the five-member redevelopment agency with certain urban renewal tasks (relocation housing and housing code enforcement) the responsibility of other city departments. In the absence of an overall renewal agency, considerable effort is needed to achieve coordination among three major departments responsible for redevelopment and renewal, city planning, and relocation housing, as well as inspectional work undertaken by four other city departments. On the question of coordination the city manager reports:

"Greater coordination of renewal efforts might be achieved if there were created a city department of development administered by a development coordinator. Such a department might have five technical sections, each of which would be administered by a trained professional: redevelopment, planning, real estate, community relations, and code enforcement. The existence of this department would be beneficial to promoting the development of a comprehensive approach to renewal. Such an approach would involve long-range planning, conservation, and capital programming as well as redevelopment. It would allow for a pooling of technical manpower, such as planners, to be used in a manner which would best promote comprehensive planning as a prerequisite to individual renewal project planning."

Coordination is now achieved in Hartford by interdepartmental staff conferences which are called as needed by the city manager, the redevelopment agency director, and the city planning director. It is significant that the city manager of Hartford refers to a "department of development." It provides organizational status, in one agency, for all of the major and complex programs bearing on urban renewal.

#### Permanent Nature of Urban Renewal

The last set of questions asked of city officials was as follows: "Does the city council regard urban renewal as a permanent function of the city government? Is the council aware of the continuing need for urban renewal and its relationship to long-term planning, the capital budget, and economic development? How do the citizens generally regard urban renewal? Are they aware of its long-term implications?"

The strongest support for urban renewal from all elements of the community is registered in Norfolk. This undoubtedly is the end product of a long period of gestation from the early and controversial days of public housing in the 1930's to the comprehensive redevelopment projects now under way. Strong support also was indicated in Pontiac where the city has been engaged since 1953



in an extensive program of public improvements including a new city hall, public safety building, an addition to the city hospital, airport expansion, street resurfacing, and many other projects. These projects have been well received, and urban renewal seems a logical extension of community investment to preserve property values.

In four cities — Berkeley, Columbia, Phoenix, and Tacoma — urban renewal has not progressed far enough to provide a definite answer. In Columbia and Phoenix the city council is not fully committed to urban renewal. In Berkeley and Phoenix citizen support has not been developed. In Tacoma the public is "favorably disposed," but "full understanding of all the implications of this program has not been attained." It is fair to say, in these four cities, that the programs are still so new that there has not been time to gain full acceptance on the part of the city council, interest groups, and the general public. Certainly the average citizen is not likely to be very interested at least until construction has started on one project.

The job of achieving understanding of urban renewal can be illustrated further by drawing on the experiences of Hartford under the headings of "City Council Attitudes" and "Citizen Attitudes."

City Council Attitudes. The Hartford city council probably does not regard urban renewal, *per se*, as a permanent municipal function. On the other hand they have accepted permanent city government responsibility for housing code enforcement and for public housing. While the city council is perhaps not aware of the broad long-term implications of urban renewal, they have not yet had a comprehensive picture given them on the need for urban renewal on a city-wide basis. Neither have they been given comprehensive information on long-range planning, capital budgeting, and economic development as affected by urban renewal.

The experience in Hartford is illustrative of the time that it takes to develop urban renewal, especially in relation to long-term community planning; to get the first projects under way; and to gain council appreciation of its value to the city.

Citizen Attitudes. The newspapers and radio and television stations in Hartford have provided vigorous, continuing support for urban renewal. This undoubtedly has been helpful in promoting public acceptance. At the November, 1958, election the voters approved redevelopment bond issues involving \$1,800,000 by almost four-to-one majorities.

The principal obstacle to public understanding in Hartford has been the long period of time needed for project study, planning, financing, and development. The first surveys were made in 1950 when the redevelopment agency was created. The work was stalled for a year in 1953 and 1954 pending a court decision upholding the state redevelopment act. Now, nine and one-half years after the redevelopment agency was established, four redevelopment projects are actually being undertaken.

The process is complicated and time-consuming. Quoting the city manager of Hartford: "Few citizens understand the actual process of renewal. Publicity has created a general expectation that the process would expeditiously bring about a redevelopment of the East Side and the Windsor Street areas. Such has not been the case. The public is confused at the apparent delay in replacing slums with some tangible form of redevelopment. Property owners and tenants . . . have not realized that changes in the anticipated date of acquisition [of land and buildings] are normal to most renewal projects."

### Conclusions

Five major conclusions can be drawn from this report:

1. The need for urban renewal can be determined with relative ease by use of objective criteria, including readily available statistics. Planning methods can be used to delineate urban renewal areas rather precisely.
2. Urban renewal must be sold to the city council, interest groups, and the general public. To do so requires organized local support. Interest groups often must organize and campaign for two or three years before urban renewal can be undertaken. Where possible, however, the city government should take the lead in organizing local support for renewal. Organized opposition is not likely to be encountered on a city-wide basis, but it can spring up quite strongly in project areas.



3. Urban renewal, especially over the long run, is likely to involve tremendous municipal expenditures. To get the most for its money, the city needs a comprehensive or master plan to integrate with urban renewal planning, the capital improvement program, and the capital budget.

4. Urban renewal should be integrated with central management—be it through a department of urban renewal, a coordinator in the office of the city manager, or a division of the department of planning.

5. The city council, interest groups, and the general public are not likely to be aware of the permanent nature of urban renewal. Nevertheless, when a city embarks upon urban renewal it should consider it as a permanent function of the city government. Its benefits can not be realized on a short-term or project basis.

Other and more general conclusions can be drawn, so to speak, by reading between the lines in the reports submitted by the seven cities and through a review of other books and articles in the general field of urban renewal.

Causes of Blight. Larger cities like Chicago and Baltimore with more experience in redevelopment and renewal find that it is an unending struggle. New blight develops faster than old blight is removed. Slums are still profitable; net in-migration (population influx) continues; and enforcement is costly and difficult. Smaller cities are not likely to encounter these forces in degree or in kind. On the other hand it is not likely that urban renewal will be anywhere near finished with the completion of a few projects within five or six years.

The most fortunate cities are those like Pontiac with a high percentage of owner-occupied dwelling units (80 per cent in Pontiac). Sociologists and other students of urban government agree that urban renewal has the greatest chance for success in such communities.

Emphasis on Housing. The bulk of the federal grants for urban renewal can only be given for projects involving redevelopment of residential areas. Only limited funds are available for clearance and redevelopment of commercial and industrial areas which are just as vital to the economic well-being of the city. Regardless of federal assistance, cities should consider urban renewal in relation to over-all economic development (see MIS Report No. 177, *The City's Role in Economic Development*, issued in October, 1958).

Emphasis on Downtown Areas. While redevelopment of the central area probably has to come first, cities should not overlook the possible need for redevelopment in other parts of the city.

It is understandable why the central area should be first. It is the kind of project most easily sold to business interests; it can bring the highest and most easily measured return in taxes to the city government; and it always has the lure of providing greater competition with outlying shopping centers. The history in larger cities, however, of slums spreading outward from the center of the city should be a warning that projects cannot be considered on an isolated basis.

Time Required. A city considering an urban renewal program should realize that it is a time-consuming job. Nine years elapsed in Hartford between the creation of the redevelopment agency and the start of the first projects. Norfolk's first project was approved in 1951 and is expected to be finished during 1959. Pontiac has been the most successful in this regard. The city began exploring the possibility of an urban renewal project in early 1956. Final detailed planning is now being done; and the city expects to begin property acquisition and land clearance in late 1959 or early 1960.

Acknowledgements. The Executive Board of the International City Managers' Association at a meeting in Dallas in October, 1958, authorized the creation of a Study Committee on Urban Renewal to study ways of promoting urban renewal among cities and to report on best practices in selected cities with experience in the program. The committee is composed of three city managers who are ICMA Vice-Presidents: Irving G. McNayr, Columbia, South Carolina, chairman; John J. Desmond, Poughkeepsie, New York; and W. T. Williamson, Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the committee members for their help in setting up the outline and procedures for this report and in reviewing a tentative draft.



Special thanks are due also to the city managers and other city officials who furnished comprehensive case histories for this report: Ray W. Wilson, city manager, Phoenix, Arizona; John D. Phillips, city manager, Berkeley, California; C. F. Sharpe, city manager, Hartford, Connecticut; Robert A. Stierer, administrative assistant and urban renewal coordinator, Pontiac, Michigan; Don F. Allard, administrative assistant, Columbia, Missouri; Thomas F. Maxwell, city manager, Norfolk, Virginia; and David D. Rowlands, city manager, Tacoma, Washington.

Sources of Information. The most concise and readable story of the evolution of urban renewal and its implications for American cities is *The Challenge of Urban Renewal* published in 1958 by the Urban Land Institute, 1200 18th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C. The report was distributed in January, 1959, by the American Municipal Association to its direct member cities. Other cities can obtain copies from the Urban Land Institute at \$3 each.

Many national organizations, public and private, can help cities in planning and developing urban renewal programs. The major sources of such assistance are the following:

Urban Renewal Administration. Administers federal urban renewal assistance as a component of the Housing and Home Finance Agency. Offers communities technical and other professional aid in preparing local programs. Service includes publication and dissemination of technical bulletins. Write Director, URA, Housing and Home Finance Agency, Washington 25, D. C.

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. Professional organization for persons engaged in community rebuilding, slum clearance, redevelopment, and rehabilitation and conservation of existing neighborhoods. Publishes the *Journal of Housing*, national magazine for housing and renewal officials. Maintains Urban Renewal Service consisting of a semi-monthly newsletter, special bulletins and publications, reprints of magazine and newspaper articles, and advice and information through an inquiry service. Write NAHRO, 1313 East 60 Street, Chicago 37.

American Society of Planning Officials. Engages in research in various aspects of planning, zoning, and urban renewal. Acts as clearinghouse to exchange information on methods and techniques and furnishes a field consultation service. Write ASPO, 1313 East 60 Street, Chicago 37.

American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods. National organization concerned with promoting all aspects of urban renewal. Provides staff assistance in organization of neighborhood and community groups, consultation on local programs and problems, and studies of current programs and techniques of community improvement. Write ACTION, Box 462, Radio City Station, New York 20.

American Public Health Association. Has published several authoritative reports and checklists for evaluating (1) individual dwelling units and (2) neighborhood environment. Also has issued a proposed housing ordinance for control of existing housing. Write APHA, 1790 Broadway, New York 19.

Build America Better Committee of the National Association of Real Estate Boards. Will supply visiting team upon joint invitation of the mayor and the local real estate board to survey and advise on formulation of program of urban renewal. Publishes monthly newsletter. Write BABC, 1300 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

Municipal Year Book, 1956. Section on municipal housing codes controlling structural, sanitary, and other facilities, and environmental sanitation for existing dwellings.

Municipal Year Book, 1958. Section on housing demolition of privately-owned buildings through municipal police power.

Municipal Year Book, 1959. Section on urban renewal administration in 252 cities over 5,000 population; includes data on organization, staff, financing, personnel, and relocation.

*Note:* This report was prepared by David S. Arnold, publications director, the International City Managers' Association.